

Changes in the Outdoors

By Greg Freeman

After North Dakota's state legislature meets every odd-numbered year, laws related to hunting and fishing are added, deleted or modified. Sometimes, that changes the familiar.

The 2005 legislative assembly considered nearly 60 bills affecting the Game and Fish Department, more than in any other session. More than half of those bills passed and were signed into law.

"Even though we had a busy session with the number of bills under consideration, we were able to finish earlier than ever before because they were handled effectively and efficiently," said Roger Rostvet, Deputy Director for the Department.

While 33 bills became law, the following regulations may be of particular interest to hunters this fall.

Off Trail

Upland game hunters are now allowed to drive off trail, except during the deer gun season, with the landowner's written consent. Previously, upland game hunters could not drive off trail.

"This change was specifically put in place for upland game hunters," Rostvet said. "In a way, it kind of gives them similar rights of waterfowl hunters."

Youth Pheasant Season

Lawmakers established the option for a pheasant hunting season for youth ages 12-16 on the Saturday and Sunday preceding the opening of the regular pheasant season. The Game and Fish Department has chosen to initiate that option, and the youth pheasant season for 2005 is scheduled for October 1-2.

"There will be some people wondering why there is a minimum age of 12," Rostvet said. "It is just the way the bill was written up, and it passed through legislation that way."

Nonresident waterfowl hunters have options in the licenses they purchase this fall.

Tribal Lands

The licensing requirement for hunting on an Indian reservation has been changed. Individuals who hunt exclusively on Indian lands within the exterior boundaries of an Indian reservation are not required to have a state hunting license.

"This only pertains to Indian lands within the boundaries of an Indian reservation," Rostvet said. "If someone is hunting on non-tribal lands within those boundaries, a state license is required."

This young hunter is just one of many in North Dakota who can take advantage of the new youth pheasant season.



Nonresidents

A number of nonresident issues are generally addressed during a legislative session, and 2005 was no different. The following issues simplify, and make them more consistent, with other regulations, Rostvet said.

- Sandhill Crane – Nonresidents can hunt cranes with a crane permit, and now either a waterfowl license or a small game license. Previously, a nonresident could only hunt cranes with a crane permit and a nonresident small game license. Nonresidents using a waterfowl license may only hunt cranes in their waterfowl zone. Nonresidents who hunt cranes with a statewide waterfowl license or small game license may hunt sandhill cranes statewide.

- Small Game – The nonresident small game license is now valid for 14 days instead of 10. The options are one consecutive 14-day period, or two 7-day periods.

- Waterfowl – Nonresidents have an option of buying a statewide waterfowl license with no zone restrictions for \$125. The license that has zone restrictions is \$85. Like the waterfowl zone licenses, this option is for one consecutive 14-day period, or two 7-day periods.

- Full-time College Students – Any nonresident full-time student living in North Dakota who is attending an institution under the jurisdiction of the state board of higher education, a private institution of higher education, or a tribal college, may obtain a resident license, excluding a lottery license. Previously, students attending a private institution did not qualify, nor did students from states other than those involving the Midwest Student or Western Undergraduate Exchange Programs.

- Fall Turkey – Licenses that remain after the fall turkey lottery drawing are available to nonresidents for \$80. Previously, nonresidents were not eligible to apply for turkey licenses in North Dakota.

GREG FREEMAN is the Game and Fish Department's news editor.

For a complete synopsis of the 2005 bills relating to the Game and Fish Department, access the news and updates section at the Game and Fish website, discovernd.com/gnf.

For the first time in 2005, nonresidents were able to purchase remaining wild turkey licenses in North Dakota.

